

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of August 4, 2021**

The meeting was held at the Community Room of the Brown Public Library, and was also streamed via the Town GoToMeeting account for the benefit of those unable to attend in person.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm by Chair Hill-Eubanks.

**Roll Call:** Present for the meeting were Commissioners Laura Hill-Eubanks, Nancy Peck, Ruth Ruttenberg, Aaron Rhodes and Chandra Blackmer (Ruttenberg attended remotely). Also present was Clerk Mitch Osiecki.

**Set/Adjust Agenda:** None.

**Municipal Planning Grant Discussion:** Laura opened discussion by noting that applications for Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) are due Nov 1. The Planning Commission has previously discussed the value in pursuing this grant as a way to expedite the delivery of updated zoning regulations.

Laura commented that grant applications can earn extra rating points if the proposed project specifically address affordable housing.

Aaron: If the PC believes in the goal of increasing affordable housing in the community, it will be reasonable to pursue that goal, to the extent zoning regulations can do so. If the Select Board doesn't share its support for that goal, we can adjust language in regulations to the degree SB will support.

Will eventually need to load grant application into GEARS, the grant application management system used by State of Vermont. (Mitch has experience doing so).

With respect to zoning regulation updates, one previously stated goal of the PC is to promote an increase in the inventory of affordable housing in the village.

Ruth: Also believes it is important to protect the Town Forest from undesired development.

Discussion: The Town Plan advances a vision for the Town. The purpose of the grant would be to ensure that zoning regulations reinforce the goals set forth in the Town Plan.

Laura will draft an initial outline of grant application. Ruth and Nancy offered to lend their assistance as well.

The main focus of the grant application will be to support drafting language of updated zoning regulations. The process of gaining approval for the updated regulations is a separate process, but is fairly straightforward.

**Administrative:** For future meetings, PC will need to be able to access google drive from the meeting laptop, so that it can access work documents during meetings. Mitch will test capability for doing so in advance of the August meeting.

**Approval of Minutes:** Aaron moved to approve amended minutes of July 7; Nancy seconded.  
**Motion passed, 5-0.**

**Zoning Administrator Update:** Mitch briefly discussed current zoning workflow. As mentioned previously, sign permits and sign regulations have been active topics lately. There are a few commercial projects under consideration.

Mitch also addressed previous comments and concerns about the Bone Hill Solar project (location is on the east side of VT Route 12 South, about a half mile north of Route 64 intersection).

There had also been a question raised previously about site work at White's Heating on VT Route 12A. Mitch advised that White's is moving office to former Bond Auto Parts at 5 Belknap Street. Noted that another business is considering this property for relocation. Property is in the Medium Density Residential District – the DRB will have to approve any commercial use of the property.

**Zoning Regulation Updates:** Laura has added some language pertaining to Conservation Commission input on zoning review. Also, added a bit of language to section covering Energy Committee. PC members are asked to review document in advance of August meeting.

Nancy: Would like to have some broad discussion about the goals and purposes of different sections of the zoning regulations.

As previously noted, Planned Unit Development (PUD) section is a particularly thorny section.

**Next Regular Meeting:** September 1, 2021 at 7:00 pm.

**Adjournment:** Chandra moved to adjourn; Aaron seconded. **Motion passed, 5-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.